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## Liturgical Reading: The Church and the Christ

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# Liturgical Reading: The Church and the Christ

LEE MAGNESS

*This reading, exploring and reflecting on some of the biblical metaphors for the church, is configured here for a leader and three other readers.*

- L The church is a body,  
1 inter-connected and inner-connected,  
2 skin and skeleton, eyes and ears, hands and hearts,  
3 living, growing, living, dying, living, living.  
1 For just as the body is one and has many members,  
2 and all the members of the body, though many, are one body,  
3 so it is with Christ.  
1 For the body does not consist of one member but of many.  
2 If all were a single member, where would the body be?  
3 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.  
1 If one member suffers, all suffer together;  
2 if one member is honored, all rejoice together.  
3 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.  
L The church is a body, and Christ is our head.
- L The church is a family,  
1 related and interrelated,  
2 sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, adopted and adopting,  
3 living together, loving together, learning together.  
1 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone,  
and especially to those who are of the family of faith.  
2 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,  
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.  
3 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all in one family.  
That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters  
L The church is a family, and Christ is the heir.
- L The church is a temple,  
1 joined and fitted, living stones on living stone,  
2 a building, yet growing, a building, yet building,  
3 a holy habitation, the dwelling of God.  
1 Do you not know that you are God's temple  
2 and that God's Spirit dwells in you?  
3 For God's temple is holy,  
1 and you are that temple.

- 2 For we are the temple of the living God;  
3 in whom the whole structure, being joined together,  
All grows into a holy temple in the Lord.  
L The church is a temple, and Christ is the cornerstone.
- L The church is a nation,  
1 a new allegiance, a separate citizenship, a new kind of kingdom,  
2 the people who produced the peoples,  
3 the nation formed from the nations.  
1 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood,  
All a holy nation,  
2 a people for his own possession.  
3 But our citizenship is in heaven.  
1 Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals,  
2 for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God  
3 from every tribe and language and people and nation,  
All and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God.  
L The church is a nation, and Christ is the king.
- L The church is a bride,  
1 beloved and betrothed,  
2 nourished and cherished,  
3 given to the one who has given himself.  
1 The marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;  
2 it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure—  
3 for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.  
1 Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,  
2 that he might sanctify her,  
3 having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word,  
1 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor,  
2 without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,  
3 that she might be holy and without blemish.  
L The church is a bride, and Christ is the bridegroom.
- L Who is the church?  
1 family and nation,  
2,3 body and building and bride.  
L Whose is the church?  
1 head, heir, and groom,  
2,3 cornerstone, Christ is king.

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